## New Jersey Disaster Triage Tag

New Jersey Department of Health & Senior Services

Division of Health Emergency Preparedness & Response





### **Program Goal**

The goal of this program is to educate EMS First Responders on the proper use of the New Jersey Disaster Triage Tag.

### **Program Objectives**

- To describe the need for a new triage tag in New Jersey;
- To provide an overview of the New Jersey Disaster Triage Tag;
- To educate EMS First Responders on the use and applications of the New Jersey Disaster Triage Tag.

#### Reasons for the Change

- The METTAG has been an industry standard and was recommended for use throughout New Jersey;
- The METTAG was specifically identified in Emergency Support Function (ESF) 8 of the New Jersey Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) as the only recognized tag for use in New Jersey;

#### Reasons for the Change

- The use of the METTAG is severely limited in a Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosive (CBRNE) or Hazardous Materials event;
- Even though the METTAG is the only tag recognized by ESF 8, it is not the only tag used by New Jersey's EMS First Responders;
- The METTAG was developed in the early 1980s and has not had any revision. The needs of EMS are changing at a fast pace.

#### The State of New Jersey Solution

In the Winter of 2003, the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, Office of Emergency Medical Services created a committee comprised of EMS First Responders and hospital personnel from around the state to address the issue of designing a New Jersey specific Disaster Triage Tag.

### State of New Jersey Solutions

- The committee developed a new and unique triage tag to address the current and future needs of New Jersey's EMS First Responders;
- The new triage tag is designed to make up for some of the shortcomings of the METTAG and to grow with the capabilities and technological advancements of New Jersey's EMS First Responder community;

### State of New Jersey Solutions

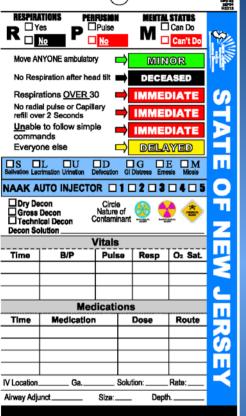
- The new tag is up-to-date, appropriate, and versatile;
- The tag will be provided to all EMS agencies free of charge by the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, Office of Emergency Medical Services;
- The acceptance and proper use of the new triage tag is essential to maintain a high level of preparedness universally throughout the state.

Personal Property / Evidence Tag Attach stub or seal inside personal property or evidence bag

Patient Destination and Transport Unit Remove this stub after errival at hospital and keep until attached to patient care report

PEEL AND STICK TO

PATIENT CHART



#### **DECEASED**

IMMEDIATE
LIFE THREATENING INJURIES

DELAYED

NON-LIFE THREATENING INJURIES

MINOR MINOR INJURIES

UNINJURED

## Triage Tag Characteristics

- **★ Two sided**
- ★ Three basic components
  - >Tear Off Sections
  - >Main Body
  - > Peel-off Stickers

NON-LIFE THREATENING

UNINJURED

DOCUMENTED BY OFFICIAL

MINOR

☐ Personal Property

#### **Triage Tag - Side 1**

- Property/Evidence Tear-off Strip
- Adhesive Strip
- Triage Algorithm
- Nerve Agent Symptoms
- NAAK (Mark-1) Use
- Contamination/Decon
- Vital Signs and Treatment

Personal Property / Evidence Tag Attach stub or seal inside personal property or evidence bag

Patient Destination and Transport Unit

Remove this stub after arrival at hospital and keep until attached to patient care report

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#### **DECEASED**

#### IMMEDIATE LIFE THREATENING INJURIES

NON-LIFE THREATENING INJURIES

MINORINAURIES

#### UNINJURED

#### Triage Tag - Side 2

- Destination Tear-off Strip
- Tracking Number
- Injuries/Patient Information
- Related Patients Area
- Peel-off Tracking Numbers
- Demographics
- Triage Categories

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UNINJURED
DOCUMENTED BY

# Component 1 The tear-off sections

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#### **Patient Status**

- This section is used to identify the treatment/transport priority of the patient and is used like the METTAG;
- The rip off tabs below the patient's priority should be torn off and turned into the triage area officer.

#### **DECEASED**

#### IMMEDIATE

LIFE THREATENING INJURIES

DELAYED

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MINOR

MINOR INJURIES

#### UNINJURED

**DOCUMENTED BY OFFICIAL** 

\*Note the "UNINJURED" portion. This is new and should be used for victims that do not need or want care. These uninjured victims will not be entered into the EMS system but still need to be documented. This new feature will also allow for the victim to be contacted at a later time should any unforeseen problems arise, including health-related and investigation issues.



## Personal Property

Personal Property / Attach stub or seal inside

Evidence Tag personal property
or evidence bag

This tear off strip is used to identify a victim's personal property that may be removed or confiscated during operations. It should be placed with the items and can be retrieved using the triage tag number as a receipt.



#### **Destination**

Patient Destination and Transport Unit Remove this stub after amval at hospital and keep until attached to patient care report

This tear off strip is used to designate the hospital or location to which the patient will be transported. After the patient is transferred to hospital personnel, the strip is removed and kept by the transporting party.



# Component 2: The Body of the Triage Tag

The main body of the tag is to be completed by the EMS professional. This section will stay with the patient.

#### Personal Property / Evidence Tag

**Patient Destination** and Transport Unit Attach stub or seal inside personal property or evidence bag

Remove this stub after arrival at hospital and keep until attached to patient care report

	Evidence	Tag	
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☐ Personal Property

PEEL AND STICK TO PATIENT CHAI	DISASTER TRIAGE TAG		
RESPIRATIONS PERFUSION Pulse Pulse No N		Allergies  1-Abrasion 2-Amputation 3-Avulation 4-Bleading 6-Contusion 6-Puncture	
Move ANYONE ambulatory  No Respiration after head tilt  Respirations OVER 30  No radial pulse or Capillary refill over 2 Seconds  Unable to follow simple come has Everyone else  DELAYED	STA1	Pain Sections 19. Section 19.	
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DECEASED

DECEASED

IMMEDIATE

IFE THREATENING INJURIES

IMMEDIATE
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UNINJURED

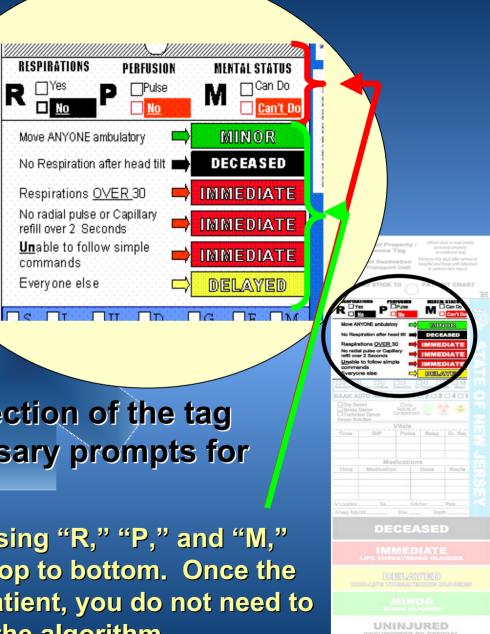
UNINJURED
DOCUMENTED BY
OFFICIAL

# Triage Algorithm

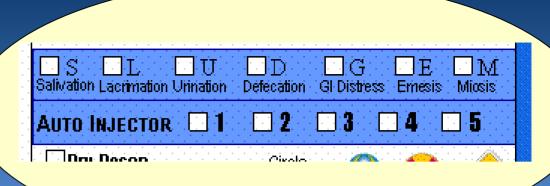
The use of a START triage algorithm is critical during large scale incidents. Since it is used infrequently during

"normal" operations, this section of the tag gives responders the necessary prompts for patient triage.

Establish the triage category using "R," "P," and "M," then follow the algorithm from top to bottom. Once the category is established for the patient, you do not need to complete the rest of the algorithm



# Nerve Agent symptoms & NAAK treatment

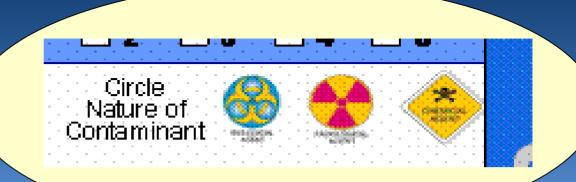


#### The blue section has 2 parts

- The "SLUDGEM" mnemonic for nerve agent symptoms: the appropriate box(es) should be checked based on the patient's clinical symptoms. This section could be started by the decon team and continued as symptoms progress;
- The "Auto Injector" section: a new box should be checked after each time a patient is injected with a NAAK (Mark I kit).



# CBRNE & HazMat Symbols



These symbols should be used to indicate the type of substance with which the patient was contaminated. This will also help to make other responders aware of the possible hazards present at the incident.

REMEMBER: If the Patient has a triage tag, they have most likely been decontaminated. Use caution until this can be confirmed.



## Type of Decon & Solution Used



This section should be used after a patient has undergone any type of decontamination. The solution and type of decontamination should be recorded in the areas provided.



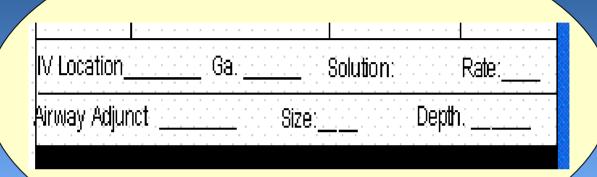
Vitals & Medications

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Airway Adjunct Size: Depth						

Document the patient's vital signs and any medications given. Include any Nerve Agent Antidote Kits (NAAKs), such as Mark-1 Kits, administered to the patient.



IV & Airway

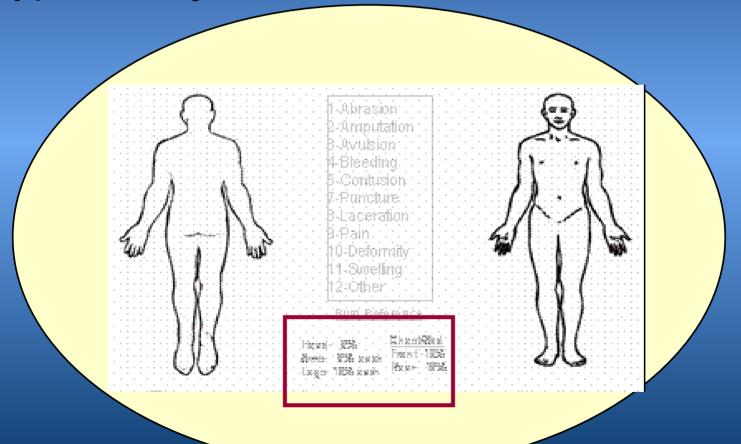


- If an IV is established, document the site, gauge, fluid and rate;
- If an airway adjunct is used, document the type of adjunct and other applicable information.



### Injuries

This section is to show the locations and types of injuries





#### Personal Information

This section is for the patient's personal information. It should only be filled out when there is time to do so. This may be in the treatment area, enroute to the hospital, or not at all.

Note this area for religious preference. Many people have religious beliefs that may require special consideration. If possible, their needs or desires should be honored – but usually only if they do not interfere with the efficacy of the operation and the care of others.

Religion



# The Tag's Adhesive Strip



The main purpose of the adhesive strip is to attach the triage tag to the patient's hospital chart, once at the receiving facility. The tag then becomes a permanent part of the patient's record.



#### Component 3

#### Peel-off Decals

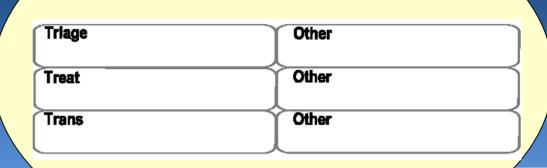
The peel-off decals are used when a patient enters or exits an area, such as treatment or transport. The peel-off decals allow log entries to be quicker and more accurate.

If all the peel-off decals are used, then the responder can simply write in the number where appropriate.

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# Peel-off Decals



As a patient moves from area to area, such as treatment or transport, a decal is removed from the triage tag and placed in the log.



# Place related minor or guardian labels

Place related minor or

guardian labels

Note the "Place related minor or guardian labels" here portion. This area should be used when a parent/guardian and a patient are separated. A decal from the minor's triage tag can be placed on the parent/guardian's tag, and vice versa. This will help make it easier to find either party at a later time.



### NJ Disaster Triage Tag

Each tag comes with an attached 48-inch string that is used to place the tag around the patient's neck (preferably) or other body part

# USE OF THE NJ DISASTER TRIAGE TAG

- After triaging a patient, pull off the appropriate colored bars as one piece;
- Do not write on the tag during initial triage;
- Hang the tag around the patient's neck.



## CHANGING A PATIENT'S PRIORITY

- Patient's conditions can change the need to reevaluate the priority of a patient may arise
- To change the patient's priority:
  - Leave the original tag on the patient;
  - Re-tag the patient with a new triage tag;
  - Write a large "2" on the new triage tag to indicate a changed priority and the re-triage effort;
  - Additional successive re-triaging should be numbered sequentially (i.e. "3," "4," etc.).

### **Storage of Triage Tags**

- Triage tags come in bundles of 25;
- The Office of Emergency Medical Services requires that each licensed ambulance and recommends that each volunteer ambulance carry 50 New Jersey Disaster Triage Tags;
- This allows for easy patient accountability & relieves triage personnel of the responsibility of counting patients.

### **Triage Kits**

- Triage kits should be created with S.T.A.R.T. system methods in mind. They may include:
  - Triage tags,
  - Airway adjuncts,
  - Gross bleeding control-bandages.
- These tools are designed to address patient care issues encountered during triage.

#### When to use Triage Tags

- The New Jersey Disaster tag should be used anytime there are:
  - -8 or more "green" patients
  - 6 or more patients of mixed categories
  - 4 or more "red" patients.

## How do I obtain more triage tags?

Additional New Jersey Disaster Triage Tags can be obtained by visiting the Office of Emergency Medical Services' website at <a href="http://www.state.nj.us/health/ems">http://www.state.nj.us/health/ems</a>

and following the link for the New Jersey Disaster Triage Tag.

Complete the request for additional tags and forward it to OEMS.

### **Summary: Concepts**

- The New Jersey Disaster Triage Tag is a forward-looking, all-hazards method of documenting patients and victims from a mass casualty incident.
- The New Jersey Disaster Triage Tag is now the accepted tag identified in the State of New Jersey's Emergency Operations Plan, Emergency Support Function (ESF#8) for Emergency Medical Services.

### **Summary: Triage Algorithm**

- The S.T.A.R.T. algorithm is printed on the tag to refresh EMS First Responders;
- This also allows for the rapid on-site training of non-trained personnel.

#### **Summary: Patient Status**

- The New Jersey Disaster Triage Tag uses color coded tear-off sections and injury documentation similar to that of the METTAG;
- The New Jersey Disaster Triage Tag addresses the concern of affected but uninjured patients and refusals by incorporating a "White" category.

### **Summary: Tear-off Strips**

- Personal Property can be tracked using the tag number;
- Evidence can be collected and sorted using the serial number on the tag.

## Summary: Body of Tag

- Decontamination solutions can be documented;
- New sections have been included to address the specific concerns of nerve agent exposures.

### **Summary: Body of Tag**

- The tag also includes pertinent information such as name, address, medical history, allergies, medications, etc.;
- An adhesive strip has been added to allow the tag to be easily attached to the hospital's patient chart.

#### Summary: Peel-off Decals

- Peel-off decals are designed to make patient tracking more efficient;
- Peel-off decals help to ensure accurate documentation of victims throughout the triage-treatment-transport process;
- The NJ Disaster Triage Tag allows minors and others to be associated with caretakers.

#### This training program was developed by

UMDNJ Center for BioDefense for the

New Jersey Department of Health & Senior Services

Office of Emergency Medical Services

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